

27
A Funeral

S E R M O N

Occasion'd by the

D E A T H

Of the Late Reverend

Mr. DANIEL GILSON:

Who departed this Life, *February* 8. 1727-8, in
the LXXIst Year of his Age.

Preached at

COLCHESTER:

FEBRUARY 13.

By JOHN TREN.

*Published at the Request of the Ministers and others
who heard it.*

L O N D O N :

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A Funeral

W. Muggrave

Mr. D. W. P. Gibson



COLLECTOR

BY JOHN T. R. E. A.

L O N D O N

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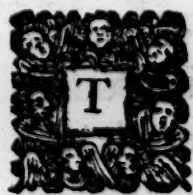
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I THESS. IV. 13, 14.

But I would not have you to be ignorant, Brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no Hope.

For if we believe that JESUS died, and rose again, even so them also that sleep in JESUS, will GOD bring with him.



THE mournful Occasion of the present Solemnity, you all know to be the Death of the late Reverend and Pious Mr. DANIEL GILSON, whose long and faithful Labours in the Gospel, cannot but render his Name and Memory very dear to this Church of CHRIST. The Office assigned to me, of Preaching his Funeral Sermon, I have readily

A Funeral Sermon for the

accepted, at the Request and Desire of his Relations and Friends, and to shew my great Respect to the Memory of my deceased Father, Friend and Fellow-Labourer in the Work of our Common LORD. * * * * *

THE Words that I have chosen as the Subject of my Discourse at this Time, have no immediate Connection with the antecedent Verses, but seem to be a new Theme or Argument, which the Apostle is insisting upon, and pursues throughout the fourth Chapter, and the Beginning of the fifth.

THE Occasion of these Words, was briefly this: It had been a Custom of long standing, and of universal Prevalency in the Heathen World, to make most sad Lamentations over their deceased Friends; they had Players on Instruments of solemn and doleful Sound, and hired Women to counterfeit the most passionate Grief, on Purpose to raise the greater Floods of Sorrow in the surviving Relatives; which would often arise to that Height, as to drive them to the most extravagant Behaviour, such as beating their Breasts, tearing their Hair, cutting and maiming

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ing their Flesh; Instances of this are every where to be found in Heathen Authors; neither are they wanting in the sacred Scriptures themselves; God saw fit particularly to forbid it the Jews in the Law he gave them; Lev. xix. 27, 28. *Ye shall not round the Corners of your Heads, neither shalt thou mar the Corners of thy Beard; ye shall not make any cutting in your Flesh for the Dead, nor print any Mark upon you, I am the LORD.* There are frequent Allusions also hereunto in the Prophets, particularly Jer. ix. 17. *Thus saith the LORD of Hosts, consider ye, and call for the Mourning Women, that they may come, and send for Cunning Women, that they may come, and let them make haste, and take up a wailing for us, that our Eyes may run down with Tears, and our Eye-lids gush out with Waters; and we have an Instance of it in the New Testament, Matth. ix. 23. When JESUS came into the Ruler's House, and saw the Minstrels and People making a Noise..*

To this Custom had the *Thessalonians* been addicted, whilst in their unconverted State, as well as the rest of the Heathen

then World; and even after they had taken the Profession of Christianity upon them, they still retain'd it; this the Apostle concluded would bring a Scandal upon the Christian Profession, as being a Reproach on that Faith and Hope, which the Gospel gave after Death; which Custom therefore he endeavours to bring his Converts off from, and to make them with Patience and Resignation submit to the Divine Providence in the Deaths of their Friends; by suggesting such Considerations to them, as were naturally adapted to silence their Grievs and allay their Sorrows;

BUT I would not have you ignorant Brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others, which have no Hope, for if we believe, that JESUS died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in JESUS will GOD bring with him; q. d. That great Lamentation and Sorrow which the Heathen Nations round you, and those of your unconverted Brethren in the midst of you, make over their departed Friends, proceeds from, and is better suited to that hopeless State they are in; when their Friends are taken from them
by

by Death they imagine them to be lost for ever, and entertain no Expectations of their being released from the Bands of Death. And therefore they give themselves up to Rage and Despair at parting with them; your imitating them is wholly inconsistent with your Profession, as Christians, and can only be occasioned by Ignorance and Inconsideration; you believe that JESUS our Lord and Saviour died and rose again; of Consequence you must believe, that when he shall come to judge the World, GOD will take care that all those who sleep in JESUS shall come with him; this Faith and Hope therefore should be a Check to your Sorrow, and make you refrain from your present, Heathenish Practices.

THE Doctrinal Proposition, which these Words hold forth, and which I design by Divine Assistance to speak to, is this,

THAT a firm Belief of a future Resurrection is the best Antidote against immoderate Sorrow for those who sleep in JESUS.

IN handling this Proposition the Method I propose, is,

I. To

I. To inquire what is meant by sleeping in JESUS?

II. WHEN Sorrow for those who sleep in JESUS may be said to be immoderate?

III. WHAT Grounds of Belief we have, that those who sleep in JESUS shall rise again?

IV. To evidence the Truth of this Proposition.

I. I AM to enquire what is meant by sleeping in JESUS? And here it will not be amiss just to premise, that this Sleep can only be meant of the Body, and must not be understood of the Soul. The Soul is of an immaterial Nature, not liable to Decay or Corruption; a vigorous, active Substance, and would be always employ'd in the Exercise of one or other of her Faculties, if not clogg'd or hinder'd by the Body; whereas the Body is a Composition of lazy, unactive Particles in themselves, and always liable to Vicissitudes and Changes,
Wastings

Waftings and Rest; By Sleeping in JESUS, then in the general, must be understood, according to another Scripture Phrase, *Dying in the LORD*, Rev. xiv. 13. 'Tis no unusual Thing for the sacred Scripture to represent Death unto us under the Notion of a Sleep; innumerable Passages might be collected to manifest it; I shall mention one or two, *Dan. xii. 2. Many of them that sleep in the Dust of the Earth, shall awake, some to everlasting Life, and some to Shame and everlasting Contempt.* I COR. xv. 18. *If CHRIST be not raised, then they which are fallen asleep in CHRIST are perished.* Ver. 20. *But now is CHRIST risen from the Dead, and become the First-fruits of them that slept.* Death therefore being plainly to be understood by the Metaphor. To sleep in JESUS, may signify,

I. To die in the Profession of the Faith of JESUS as the CHRIST, and his Gospel as a divine Revelation, vitally united to him by a Participation of his Spirit; firmly trusting to his Grace, and hoping for Salvation only in and through him.

THUS the Phrase is applicable to every true and sincere Believer in CHRIST, who being through Divine Grace made

free from Sin, and become the Servant of Righteousness, and yielding himself unto GOD, as one who is alive from the Dead, continues firm and steadfast unto the End, and is faithful unto Death, who when he comes to leave the World, recommends his departing Spirit into JESUS's Hands, through a full Persuasion that He is able to keep that committed unto him against that Day, and will fulfil all those Promises on which by Grace he hath been made to hope.

2.) To sleep in JESUS, may signify also to die for JESUS; for the Sake of his Religion, and in Testimony of the Faith of the Gospel. And the Phrase of Sleeping in JESUS, is peculiarly applicable to those Martyrs and Confessors, who not being moved by any Fears, Threats, or Prospect of Death, in all its Terrors, to renounce their Religion, willingly laid down their Lives in Defence of Christianity, and cheerfully sealed the Truth with their Blood.

WHEN the Religion of CHRIST made its first Appearance in the World, it being so contrary to, and condemning all other Religions at that Time received, as impious, or vain and insignificant, drew on itself and Professors, according
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to former Predictions the Hatred and Malice of the whole World. *The Heathen raged, the People imagined vain Things the Kings of the Earth did set themselves and the Rulers took Counsel together, how they might suppress it; Psal. xi. 1, 2, 3. and whoever came to Christ at that time as he himself told those that followed him, Luke xiv. 26. And did not hate his Father and Mother, and Wife and Children, and Brethren and Sisters, yea his own Life also could not be his Disciple.*

But notwithstanding all this so great was the Evidence of the Truth of our most holy Religion, so glorious the Efficacy of Divine Grace, that all the Attempts of its implacable Adversaries proved vain and abortive; Men were not deterr'd by all that could be said or done against it, from embracing it; Converts were daily made; and Christianity every Day got Ground; and so firm were they in their Profession, that though many were put to Death for it, their Places were soon filled up by New Proselytes. And what was afterward observed by one of the Christian Fathers, was at that Time also true, " the Blood

A Funeral Sermon for the

“ the Martyrs, proved the Seed of the “ Church. ” An Account of which, we have in *the Acts of the Apostles*.

SUCH as these therefore who contentedly bare all the Cruelty that the Malice of their Antichristian Enemies inflicted upon them, for their Adherence to the Lord JESUS, and resigned their Lives in the Cause of CHRIST, may be truly said to sleep in JESUS.

AND in both these Senses may, and ought the Phrase Sleeping in JESUS, be taken in the *Text*; neither the one, nor the other should be excluded, and so much for the first Inquiry.

I PROCEED now,

II.) To inquire, When Sorrow for those who sleep in JESUS, may be said to be immoderate.

SOME Grief and Sorrow for the Loss of Friends and Relations, however satisfied we may be of the Goodness of their future State, that they slept in JESUS, Nature calls for, and Christianity is far from forbidding. We do not put off our Humanity, when we take the Christian Profession upon us. Death of itself is

is a very sad and melancholy Thought, and few Persons have the Resolution and Courage to entertain themselves with close Meditations on it, without feeling very sensible Commotions within them, whilst they consider, what will be the End of the human Nature, what so Godlike a Creature as Man must come to: The Death of a Stranger or a Person unknown, when reported or seen, is not without all Effect on a considering Mind; the News or Sight of a dead Acquaintance, whom we had familiarly known and conversed with, hath a more sensible Effect upon us; an intimate Friend, a near and dear Relation, a Parent, an Husband, snatched away by Death, must touch in the most tender Part; and for Christianity to require us to be insensible, would be to command us to act contrary to Nature, which is unworthy of GOD: The Apostle doth not say to the *Thessalonians*, Do not grieve, be not sorrowful; but *sorrow not as others, who have no Hope*. Be not guilty of those Extravagancies, which ignorant *Heathens* express at the Death of their Friends. Christianity doth not injoya us to root out our natural Passions,

Passions (for that would be a Thing impossible) but only to check and restrain them, that they fly not out to Excess; which when they may be said to do; it is our present Business to enquire. And

I. OUR Sorrow for those who sleep in JESUS may then be said to be immoderate, when it riseth to that Height as to hurt and damage ourselves; when it shall proceed so far as to have a bad Effect upon our Bodies, and impair our Health our Sorrow then certainly goes beyond its due Bounds, and becomes unlawful.

OUR Bodies as well as our Souls are proper Objects of our Care; and there is a Duty incumbent upon us towards them, both as we are Men, and as we are Christians. Self-preservation is a first Principle of Nature, and Reason dictates to us, that it misbecomes us to injure ourselves; and neither Christianity nor Grace gives any Man a Licence to be cruel or barbarous to himself. Our Religion teacheth us that our Bodies and Spirits are GOD'S; which therefore we have no Right over, to deal with them, as we ourselves shall see fit; nor can we dispose

pose of, without the Divine Will. This all are sensible enough of in some notorious Instances. For any in the Excess of his Passion and Grief, to lay violent Hands on himself, appears at first Sight unreasonable and impious, and all would very readily declare his Abhorrence of it; How then can we think the doing the same Thing in a slower, though as sure a Way can be becoming and lawful? Why should only the Alteration of Circumstances make the same Thing less horribly and frightful? Inward Grief and Sorrow when indulged to a high Degree, is as pernicious and will prove as fatal to the humane Body, as the rankest Poison; *The Sorrow of the World*, the Apostle tells us, *worketh*^{2 Cor. vii. 10.} *Death*. It afflicts and wastes the Body, and causeth it to pine away, or brings it into such Disorder as often issues in Death; and where a Person willingly impairs his Health and destroys his bodily Constitution, which way so ever it be done, assuredly his Practice can never be vindicated and defended by any Precept of Nature, or positive Law of it, but is wholly inconsistent both with Reason and our Religion.

2. OUR Sorrow for those who sleep in JESUS becomes then immoderate, when we give so much Way to it, as to neglect or transgress the Duties of our respective Stations and Conditions of Life; which GOD and Nature hath made incumbent upon us.

THERE is no Station or Condition of Life, whether of a superior or inferior Nature, but what hath Duties annexed to it; which it is the Christian's Business to consider, and keep himself always in a Preparedness for, and constantly to regard; which he cannot knowingly omit or transgress without displeasing GOD. His Diligence and Care should be at all times employed in this, how he may so behave himself as to answer the End of Providence, and walk worthy of GOD who hath placed him in it; this is no small or trifling Matter, though it be too little considered by Christians. It is a necessary Part of Religion; and we cannot acquit ourselves to CHRIST and his sincere Disciples, without having due Regard hereunto.

FOR any therefore so to brood over his Sorrow, and indulge his Grief, as to forget or neglect these necessary Duties
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whether they relate to G O D, others, or himself, which his particular Station or Condition of Life calls for at his Hands, is not to act like a Christian; his Grief then becomes immoderate, and his Sorrow is a Sin against G O D.

3.) O U R Sorrow for those who sleep in J E S U S, becomes immoderate, when in our sorrowful Moods, we either entertain hard Thoughts of G O D, or reflect on his Ways of Providence.

As G O D is the Supreme Author and Giver of Life, so he is the absolute Owner and Disposer of it. It was he that gave us, and all the Creatures our Beings at first. It is he, that in his Providence continueth us with them in being, supports and maintains our Natures, and upholds our Souls and Life. He hath determined the Time of Man upon Earth, and hath set him Bounds which he cannot pass. And when Man hath accomplished as an Hireling his Day, G O D taketh away his Breath, Man dies, and returns to his Dust: Herein G O D acts in a sovereign and uncontrouled Manner, according to the Counsel of his Will, lengthening out, or shortning humane Life

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without giving any Account of his Ways.

GOD's Hand therefore should be eyed by us in every Dispensation of his Providence towards us, we should raise our Thoughts above Second Causes, which are but so many Instruments in the Hand of GOD, either of preserving or taking away Life; and fix our Minds on the Great Governor of the Universe, by whose Permission, Direction or Order, all Things come to pass.

AND for as much as we cannot but know that we owe ourselves and all that we have to GOD's Goodness and Bounty, we must see that God cannot be guilty of any Injustice towards us in the severest of his Dispensations. Friends, Relations, Riches, all external Enjoyments, are GOD's. His giving and continuing them to us, is all Free-Grace. His taking them away therefore from us, is but reclaiming his own; and no Cause of Complaint can be left to us. *Friend, I do thee no Wrong, Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?* Matth. xx. 11. is sufficient to stifle every Murmur; and instead of Quarrelling with God's Ways of Providence, it certainly becomes

becomes us to be still, and know that he is GOD, Psal. xli. 10. and if ever we open our Mouths, no Language suits us better than that of Job, *Naked came I out of my Mother's Womb, and naked shall I return thither, the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the LORD.*

To be insensible of the Stroke of his Hand, GOD doth not indeed require of us, and we should offend in *despising the Chastening of the LORD*, and taking no Heb. xii. 5. Notice of the Operation of his Hand.

But yet to be so touched and moved therewith, as in the Height of our Passion to be angry with GOD, and arraign his Proceedings, is most ungrateful and unjust; *ungrateful*, in that we do not rather thank GOD for our having enjoyed at all, or enjoyed so long those Mercies that now he takes from us; and *unjust*, in that it discovers an Unwillingness to give GOD his own. Let this suffice for the Second Inquiry.

I PROCEED now to consider the third Thing I proposed to inquire into, and that is,

III. WHAT Grounds of Belief we have that those who sleep in JESUS, shall rise again and this can be no improper Inquiry, when the Belief of *their Resurrection* is urged as an Antidote against immoderate Sorrow for *their Deaths*; and therefore we find the Apostle in the *Text*, laying down the Death and Resurrection of JESUS, as a Foundation to build the Hope and Belief of the rising again of those that sleep in him upon. *If we believe that JESUS died and rose again, even so must we believe, that them also that sleep in JESUS, GOD will bring with him.* The Inquiry then must be, How the Belief of JESUS's dying and rising again, will evidence the Truth of their rising again, who sleep in Him; and what Evidence such a Belief carries in it, will appear, I imagine, from these following Considerations.

I.) FROM the Resurrection of CHRIST in particular from the Dead, it will follow, that the Resurrection of Believers from the Dead, is not an impossible Thing. A Thing once being done, clearly shews it is possible to be done again.

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Was the Resurrection from the Dead a Contradiction, there could have been no such Thing as any one arising from the Dead; for a Contradiction can never be true. CHRIST's rising from the Dead manifestly proves that there is no Contradiction in it; and for as much as CHRIST is risen from the Dead, the same Power that raised him, can raise those that sleep in him also; thus the Apostle seems to argue, 1 Cor. xv. 12, 13. *Now if CHRIST be preached, that he rose from the Dead, how say some among you, that there is no Resurrection of the Dead? but if there be no Resurrection from the Dead, then is CHRIST not risen.*

2.) CHRIST's being raised from the Dead, confirms all the Promises he made whilst alive; which Promises if made good, Believers in CHRIST must also rise from the Dead.

WHILST our Saviour conversed on Earth among Men, in the Course of his Preaching, we often find him encouraging Persons to believe in him, as the promised *Messias*, on this Consideration, that He would not leave such under the Power of Death, but raise them up to Life again.

again. Thus, *John vi. 39. This is the Father's Will that hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last Day. Ver. 40. This is the Will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting Life, and I will raise him up again at the last Day. Ver. 41. No Man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me, draw him, and I will raise him up again at the last Day.*

THESE are plain and expresse Promises of the Resurrection of all Believers, and that those Promises may be trusted to, and shall be made good, GOD himself could not give greater Assurance, than by raising him, who made those Promises, again from the Dead. For by this Act of his Almighty Power, He hath given the World to understand, that JESUS was no Impostor and Deceiver, that whatever he said or did on Earth, was by Vertue of his Commission from his Father, and that GOD will make good every Tittle, that his Son promised in his Name.

3.) THE Resurrection of CHRIST, is an evident Proof, that the End of his Death was answered ; which was to deliver all those that believed in him, from the Guilt and Punishment of Sin, and consequently from Death.

DEATH was the Wages of Sin, the Consequence of Man's Transgression ; and for as much as all Mankind are Sinners, Death universally passed on all Men. The Guilt of Sin, was the Bands of Death, by which it kept all that died under its Power. CHRIST died to atone for Sin, and procure Justification and Life for all those that believed in him ; *For as much as the Children are Partakers of Flesh and Blood, He also himself likewise took Part of the same, that through Death he might destroy him that had the Power of Death, that is the Devil ; and deliver them who through Fear of Death were all their Life-time subject to Bondage ;* Heb.xi. 14, 15.

THIS being then the End of CHRIST'S Death to deliver from Guilt and Death all Believers, had CHRIST never risen from the Dead, we might conclude the End of his Death was not answered and Believers would eternally remain
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under the Power of Guilt and Death, but for as much as JESUS died and rose again we may assure ourselves, that his Atonement was accepted of GOD, the End of his Death was answered, and Believers in him shall be finally delivered from Guilt and Death; Hence it is said, CHRIST was delivered for our Offences, and rose again for our Justification; Rom. v. 25. and the Apostle thus triumphs, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57. *O Death where is thy Sting? O Grave where is thy Victory? The Sting of Death is Sin, and the Strength of Sin is the Law; but Thanks be to GOD, which giveth us the Victory, through our Lord JESUS CHRIST.*

I COME now to the fourth and last Thing I proposed, namely,

IV. To evidence the Truth of the Proposition that a firm Belief of the future Resurrection is the best Antidote against immoderate Sorrow for those who sleep in JESUS; the Truth of which I think will appear in these two Considerations.

I.) BECAUSE

1.) BECAUSE we are sure that at the Resurrection, all those who sleep in JESUS, shall be made perfectly and compleatly happy both in Body and Soul.

2.) BECAUSE we may comfort ourselves with the Hope and Expectation of seeing them again at the general Resurrection, to our mutual Satisfaction, if we follow their Faith and Patience.

1.) AT the Resurrection we are sure that all those who sleep in JESUS, shall be made perfectly and compleatly happy both in Body and Soul; which Consideration is very proper and powerful to check all immoderate Sorrow for their Deaths.

As to them to live was CHRIST, so to *die*, is their Gain; Death to them is a Deliverance from all the Anxieties of this troublesome Life; as soon as their Souls leave their Bodies, they pass into the invisible World of Spirits, and are with CHRIST in Paradise; where they enjoy nearer and fuller Communion with Him, than it was possible for them in this Life, in Company with all those pious Souls that have departed this Life, from the Foundation of the World; their Bodies in the mean
D while

while enjoying a peaceable Sleep in the Grave without any Pains or Aches to disturb and interrupt them, where all disorderly Humours cease from troubling, and the wearied Bones are at rest.

THIS is their State before that Day; a State of Ease, Peace and Happiness, though not perfect and compleat: But when the Lord JESUS shall come to Judgment, their Bodies shall be raised to a new Life, and made a fit and proper Habitation for their glorified Spirits; having left all their Dross and Pollution, all their Frailties and Imperfections behind in the Grave; *Though sown in Corruption, they shall be raised in Incorruption; though sown in Dishonour, they shall be raised in Glory; though sown in Weakness, they shall be raised in Power; tho' sown natural Bodies, they shall be raised spiritual Bodies, 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44. Fashioned like unto CHRIST's Glorious Body, Phil. iii. 12.* Their Soul and Body being reunited, they shall be caught up in the Clouds to meet the LORD in the Air, placed on his Right Hand, owned by him for his before the whole World, acquitted of all Crimes and Accusations, taken by him as Assessors in Judging and
Condemning

Condemning fallen Angels and ungodly Men, and finally received by him into his Kingdom, where they shall partake with blessed Angels, and glorified Spirits, of Joys unspeakable, and Pleasures everlasting.

WELL might the Apostle conclude this Chapter with, *Comfort ye one another with these Words*, for surely the Hope and Belief of this Happiness of our deceased Friends, which they shall be fully invested with at the Resurrection, must administer abundant Comfort to their surviving Relations, if they seriously consider it. Did we not know any thing concerning the future State of deceased Believers; or were we uncertain whether it would be a State of Happiness to them, we might then have some Reason to be deeply affected with their being taken away from us by Death, as thinking their Continuance in this present Life, would have been more to their Advantage; but now, since we are positively assured from the Word of GOD, that on their Departure from us and our World, they are happier than they could possibly be with us, and shall be made most fully and compleatly happy at the

. Resurrection-Day, our Love to them must make us bear their Loss with Patience; and it would argue a sort of Disrespect and Unkindness to our deceased Friends (the Goodness of whose State Godward we are satisfied in) to repine at their being removed into an infinitely better State than this World can afford; to be overwhelmed with Sorrow because they are gone from us to be made completely happy.

2.) AT the Resurrection we may comfort ourselves with the Hopes and Expectations of seeing them again to our mutual Satisfaction, if we follow their Faith and Patience: Which Consideration also is sufficient to prevent immoderate Sorrow at the Deaths of those who sleep in JESUS. Though they are taken from us at present, and removed far beyond our Mortal Sight, yet e'er it be long, if we tread in their Steps, we shall arrive at that Place, where they are gone before us, and meet with them again in Glory.

THIS seems not unlikely to have been more especially in the Apostle's View, when he bids the *Thessalonians* in the Text, not to sorrow as those who had no Hope.

Hope. The *Heathen* thought that their Friends at Death took a long, a lasting, an eternal *Adieu* of them, and therefore indulged an Excess of Sorrow at their Decease; but for as much as Christians hope to meet and see one the other again, they should bear their present Loss with more Patience and Resignation.

THAT we shall see our departed Friends and Relations again is a Thing unquestionable: For we shall all stand before the Judgment-Seat of CHRIST; that we shall see them again also so as to know them is not improbable: On the contrary there seem to be broad Intimations given of it in the Sacred Writings: For Instance St. Paul tells the *Corinthians*, That he trusted they should ^{2 Cor. i.} appear to one another's Joy, at the Day ^{14.} of the Lord JESUS; and also the *Thessalonians*, What is our Hope, or Joy, or ^{2 Thess. xix. 20.} Crown of rejoycing? Are not even ye in the Presence of our Lord JESUS at his Coming? Besides; if we can suppose it, (as certainly I think we may) to be an Addition of Joy and Happiness to a glorified Saint, to see one whom he was very intimate with, and loved here on Earth with the greatest Affection, in the
same

same State of Happiness with himself, such an Addition of Happiness, such an Encrease of Joy we may well suppose will not be denied them. The Angels above are represented as rejoycing at the Conversion of a Sinner on Earth, and why may not a Believer be imagined to rejoyce at finding his Friend, his Relation, arrived safe into Glory? Not that there will be any of those endearing Fondnesses that are suited to this present State of Familiarity and Friendship, but only a solid and lasting Joy and Satisfaction on the Knowledge and Sight of each other's Happiness and Glory.

WHENEVER therefore we find our Grief arising above Measure and our Sorrows ready to burst forth to Excess, such Reflections as these are and will be proper to check and stifle them; I have been obliged, it is true, to part with a true and bosom Friend, a near and dear Relation; and such a Loss, that I must be stupid, if I am not affected with. The many Hours, and Days, and Years agreeable Conversation I had with him, and the sweet Counsel that we often took together, which now I am deprived of, as often as I call to Mind

I cannot help bewailing my present Loss; however it is not an eternal Farewell that we have taken of each other. E'er it be long, I must follow him the same Way that he is gone; and I expect to meet him in Heaven, where I shall enjoy his Presence and Conversation throughout an everlasting Duration.

I SHALL conclude with making one or two Reflections.

1. How desirable and comfortable must Death be to a true Believer. To him it is not the King of Terrors, but a kind Messenger sent from GOD to convey him out of a World of Sin, of Sorrow, of Misery into a State of Ease, Rest, and Refreshment; hence Death is compared to a Sleep, than which nothing can be more welcome to one that labours hard all Day. Sleep puts an End to all our Toil, makes us forget the Fatigues we have gone through, recruits our exhausted Spirits, and gives fresh Life, Strength and Vigor to all the Parts of the Body. Such is Death to a Believer. It puts an End to all his Pain and Trouble. The Grave to him is an Asylum, a Place of Refuge and Retreat from all the Afflictions and Sorrows

rows he was subjected to, and harrafs'd with in this World. *There the Wicked cease from troubling, and there the Weary be at Rest.* In this Life a Believer hath innumerable Evils surrounding him, which serve to render his present Being uneasy and burthensome. GOD sees it often necessary for him, that he should be in Heaviness through manifold Temptations. The Unkindness of Relations, the Treachery of professed Friends, the Sorrows of Want and Poverty, the remaining Power of indwelling Corruption, the frequent Relapses into Sin, the often Returns of Illness, or the continued Misery of a crazy, shattered Constitution; these and such-like, may make him spend his Days in Grief, and Years in Sighing. But when GOD shall have accomplished his good Will and Pleasure in and concerning him here, Death, as Sleep to a wearied Man, brings him Deliverance from all his Troubles, wipes away all Tears from his Eyes. *There shall be no more Sin, nor Sorrow, nor Crying, neither shall there be any more Pain.* In the Grave his Body lies still, and quiet, and in Peace till the Morning of the Resur-

Resurrection-Day, when it shall come forth, receiving new Life, and redoubled Strength.

2. How careful and diligent should we be, that we have an Interest now in JESUS, by a true, lively, and operating Faith, that we may sleep in JESUS, when we come to die.

To us to live must be CHRIST, if ever to die doth prove our Gain. The Thoughts of Death to those who are estranged from CHRIST, cannot but be terrible; for out of CHRIST, GOD is a *consuming Fire*, and his Vengeance will burn to the lowest Hell. The Guilt of Sin must be removed, and the Power of Sin must be subdued, or the Sting of Death will never be taken away; and if ever we are justified, and sanctified, it must be through the Blood of our Lord JESUS, and by the Spirit of our GOD. To Him therefore must we flee for Security against the Terrors of Death, Him must we believe in as the Anointed and sent of GOD to be the Saviour of Mankind, depending on his Grace, trusting to his Merit, obeying through the SPIRIT his Instructions and Precepts; which unless we do in Sincerity, and with Perseverance,

rance, our professed Faith in Him, doth
noth not give us an Interest in Him, nei
ther shall we sleep in Him.

3.) WHAT abundant Reason have we
to thank GOD for the Christian Revela
tion, which has brought Life and Im
mortality to Light, and made such clear
and full Discovery of the future State
of departed Saints; by Means of which
we are enabled to bear their Loss with
Patience, and attend their Funerals with
out those passionate Excesses, which the
Light of Nature and Reason alone were
not sufficient to prevent.

I KNOW it will be expected, before
I close my Discourse, I should say some
thing with relation to that Pious Person
whose Death is the Occasion of it. And
I am truly sorry I cannot do that Justice
to Mr. *Gilson's* Character, which it really
deserves; having had no Acquaintance
with him, but in the Decline of Life
when he was almost worn out with Age
and Infirmities. His Father was ejected
out of *Much Baddow*, in this County
and is recorded in History as one of those
eminent Worthies, that preferred a good
Conscience to a good Living; chusing
rather

rather than submit to Impositions, which he thought derogatory from the Authority of CHRIST, as Supreme Head of the Church, to cast himself and Family on GOD, who, to the Praise and Glory of Divine Providence be it spoken, was not wanting in his Care of any One of the Two thousand Ministers that were turned out of the Church at the same Time.

THE Discouragements his Father had met with, and which still attended *Non-conformity*, did not keep back our late Mr. *Gilson*, from devoting himself to the Service of CHRIST, in the same Cause of Liberty; in which his Resolution and Zeal, had like to have cost him many a Time Imprisonment, and a Jayl; but the Goodness of GOD, as often preserved him from Harm.

IT was about the Time of the Happy and Glorious REVOLUTION, when our blessed Deliverer, the late King *William* of immortal Memory, out of due Regard to the Honour of GOD, and Credit of Religion, which will always suffer by a bigotted and persecuting Zeal, gave Liberty to scrupulous Consciences: About this Time GOD opened a Door

of Usefulness for him in this Place, by calling him in his Providence to succeed the Reverend Mr. *Warren*, another of those abovementioned ejected Ministers, of whose Learning and Piety, there are still living Witnesses, though his Works are a sufficient Testimony. The former Part of Mr. *Gilson's* Ministry in this Place, I must pass over in Silence; only this I am credibly informed of, which may not be unworthy noticing, That notwithstanding his peaceable Disposition and Temper, his Integrity and Uprightness of Life, the sincere and earnest Desire of promoting GOD's Glory, and the furthering the Salvation of Souls, which breathed forth in all his Sermons, notwithstanding this, he could not escape the Censures and Reproaches of a Party-spirit. But as it is often observable, that Truth and Honesty in the End doth break forth from under the Clouds that cover them, and shine with the greater Lustre; so he lived to see his Character brighten, and himself universally acknowledged, a Sound and Orthodox Preacher.

HIS Moral Character is unblemished, his greatest Enemies themselves being Judges;

Judges; and in the Course of about Forty Years, he hath behaved himself in such a Manner, as that now he is dead, the whole World may, and do say of him, he was a truly honest and upright, and peaceable Man. His Way of Preaching, was grave and solemn; his Delivery such as manifested he had a true Savour himself, of what he spake to others; so much was his Heart set on his Master's Work, that he went thro' the greatest Difficulties in the Discharge of it, and hath often been seen to ascend these Steps, when his Friends have thought him, through bodily Weakness, unable to go through it; but G O D supported and strengthened him. His long continued Infirmities, he bare with a truly Christian Patience and Resignation; and hath often seemed no otherwise affected with them, than as they hindered his Usefulness.

HIS last Indisposition sat the more heavy on him, in that Nature became so weak, as to be ready to sink under it; though throughout the whole of his Illness, he declared his Resignation to the Divine Will; and desired, and longed, and prayed to become more patient
and

and contented : The nearer he drew to his last End, his Desires to depart, and be with CHRIST, which he thought far better than any Thing in this Life, grew more fervent. The Agonies of Death he was seemingly very apprehensive of, and would frequently say, he thought it was a very hard Thing to die; but when he came within View of it, he took his final Leave of his surviving Consort with great Tenderness, without any Signs of Fear and Dread; and though the last Struggle of Nature appeared stronger, and lasted longer than could be expected, yet at last he literally fell asleep.

AND that he slept in JESUS, a living Member of CHRIST's Mystical Body, we have the greatest Reason to believe and hope, since to him to live, was always CHRIST. And though it would be ungrateful and unjust to his Memory to be unaffected at his Loss; yet it would be equally faulty to sorrow for him, as those who have no Hope. His Body is now at Rest in the silent Grave, free from all those Disorders and Pains which, whilst alive, he was so much and so long exercised with; and his Soul, we have

no Cause to doubt is safely lodged in the Arms of J E S U S, whom having not seen he loved; in whom, though he saw him not, yet believing he rejoyced with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory: His Dust will be the Charge of Providence, till the last Trump shall sound, when it shall awake, and arise, and be again united to his Spirit made perfect, and appear together before the Divine Tribunal, to receive that comfortable Sentence at the Mouth of his Judge, *Come, thou blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for thee from the Foundation of the World*; where we may expect and hope again to see and meet with him in Glory, if we practice his Instructions, and follow his Example of Faith and Patience: Which I pray G O D may be our happy Lot, through J E S U S C H R I S T our Lord:

To whom be Glory both now and for evermore.



F I N I S.

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